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EDITOR'S NOTE:

THE LAW REVIEW—WHAT VALUE?

The Board of Editors initiates with this issue a series of remarks on the value and purpose of various segments of a law review. Future topics will include: The Book Review—What Value?; The Case Comment—What Value?; The Student Note—What Value?

The law review is a unique institution in American legal education, operated in most instances entirely by students and holding an almost unbelievable monopoly on the only significant forum available to writers in the legal profession. Can such a situation possibly be justified? Is there any real value in such an arrangement?

It would seem that the single most important factor to be considered in any attempt at evaluating the law review is its function as an educational tool. Law review work offers the student a learning opportunity unlike any to be found in the classroom. Here he can learn the technical skills of legal research and develop an adeptness at employing those skills with the precision so vital to members of the legal profession. Here he makes his first real attempt at turning out a piece of legal journalism. He writes and re-writes, argues and discusses with his editor, ponders anew the approach he has taken, and finally submits his final draft. The learning experience gained from this process is truly invaluable, but the educational process usually does not stop at that point. As a senior staff member or editor he is exposed to articles submitted by fellow students, attorneys, judges and law professors, each of which must be scrutinized carefully for timeliness, substantive accuracy, mechanical precision, style, and that nebulous requirement of "publishability." He discusses the merits of the paper with the author and works out compromises on the points of disagreement. If he lacks the sophistication which comes from years of experience, he does his best to compensate for it with the spark of energy and enthusiasm that can only come when one has been entrusted with such an important task during the final year of his professional training.

The law review man gains much from his experience to be sure. He hopes that he has helped to educate while being educated. Recognizing the unique nature of his institution, he nevertheless views its existence as a vital necessity if legal scholars, practitioners and jurists are to continue to be provided with an adequate forum in which to share their thoughts and ideas with their associates. Thus, to the extent that the education he has gained and the service he has attempted to render are measurable, the value of the law review itself can be determined.

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